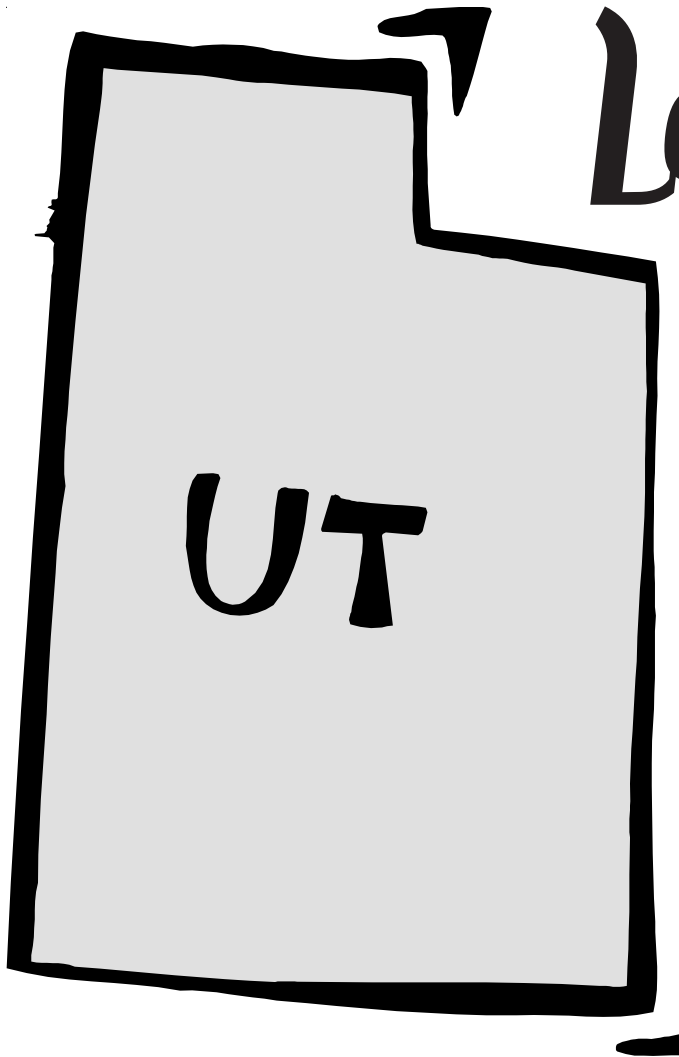


# Location Location Location



**By John Mathews**

Wages vary by area. Most workers in metropolitan Utah enjoy higher wages than in nonmetro Utah. Why? Some of the reasons: Metro Utah has larger companies, and larger companies typically pay higher salaries; there are more jobs requiring specialized skills; and more levels of supervision calling for more managerial staff. Metro areas house more company headquarters, which contain higher-paying jobs. A final reason is metro areas have more technology-dependent businesses, and technology pays well. In Area wage differences are presented in Graph A.

According to the survey, the Statewide average for Utah is \$15.10 per hour\*. Only the Salt Lake-Ogden Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was higher at \$15.60.

\* The reference period for this survey was the fourth quarter of 2001 and the first quarter of 2002.

With a few exceptions, the further you get from Salt Lake the lower the wages. The rural portions of Utah, for the most part, have lower pay levels. There are some significant exceptions. In east and central Utah, a significant number of jobs are in the Mining industry where occupational wages are much higher than other jobs in the area. Another example is Box Elder and Cache counties. In Box Elder, higher paying

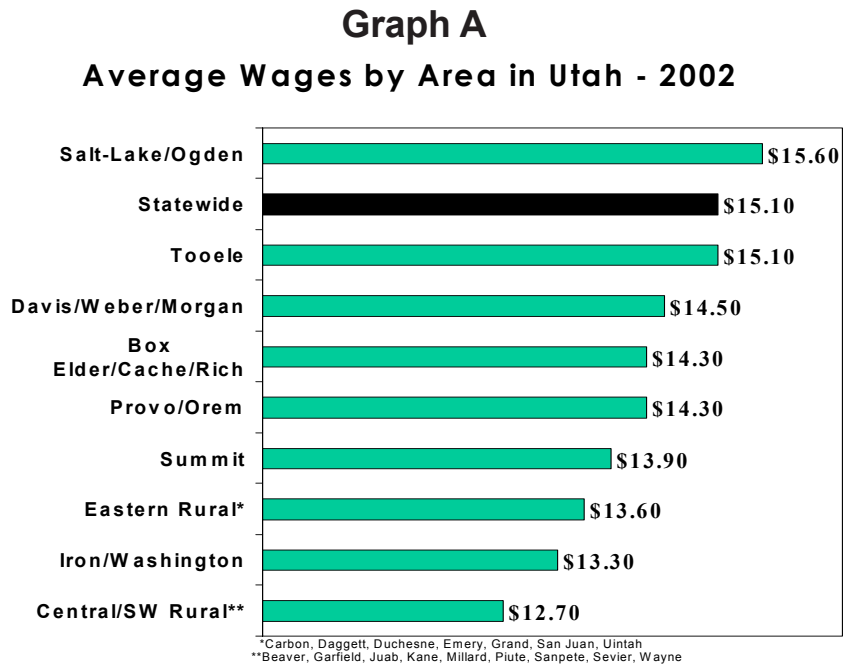
manufacturing industries operate, and, in Cache County, a major university, including the research activities associated with it, boost wages. Lower paying tourism and recreation jobs account for a higher proportion of jobs in rural Utah, which is a big reason for lower overall wages in outlying counties.

## **Wages Vary Across Utah, Even in the Same Occupation**

It's surprising – because wages are typically higher in metro counties — that accountants make more money in the Box Elder, Cache, and Rich county area than in Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties. Usually the areas of high population and business concentration enjoy higher pay.

Wages in rural counties can be substantially less than metro counties. Graph B reveals just how much. For example, a 20 percent difference for sales clerks exists between the Eastern Rural counties and Salt Lake-Ogden. For the same two areas, nurses make a fourth less in the East Rural counties than in Salt Lake-Ogden. The most glaring difference is between the Eastern Rural counties and Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties for heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers, where the difference is 50 percent - \$12.90 in rural and \$19.70 in northern Utah.

These differences exist for the same basic reasons the areas differ: different labor market conditions including the total number of jobs; the number of employers needing the occupation; the degree of worker mobility (commuting or relocating); the dominant industry in the area, and other



factors. One very important thing to remember is that even if the occupation commands a high wage in a specific area, and particularly a smaller one, it doesn't mean there are many of those high wage jobs in that area. The point here is we are talking about the level of wages, not the number of jobs at that wage.

More information on wages by occupation across Utah can be found at [www.jobs.ut.gov/wi](http://www.jobs.ut.gov/wi).

